NATION

Monsoon to hit most parts of NW-India by 25 June

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

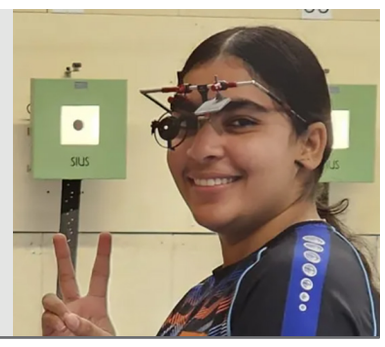
Mkts tumble nearly 1% amid Israel–Iran tension

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Suruchi wins gold in women's 10m air pistol

≫ Page: 8 ≪



www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 14 JUNE 2025 | SATURDAY | BENGALURU | 17 DHU AL-HIJJAH, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 160 | Pages: 8

DGCA recovers Black Box from AI crash site

Ten dead in BJ Medical College | Black Box is key to finding the answers | Modi visits the site, hospital

AHMEDABAD, 13 JUNE

Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) on Friday said the Black Box of the crashed Air India plane was recovered from the rooftop of the residential quarters of BJ Medical College in Ahmedabad.

At least 10 died in the hostel, when the flight crashed into the residential premises.

"AAIB began work with full force immediately. Over 40 staff from the state government joined efforts to augment the MoCA (Ministry of Civil Aviation) teams on site. "The DFDR (Black Box) has been recov-ered from the rooftop".

A Black Box is a small device that records information about an aircraft during its flight. It helps in the investigation of aviation accidents.

The DGCA also ordered enhanced safety inspection of Air India's Boeing 787 Dreamliner fleet powered by GEnx engines.

The enhanced DGCA inspection will include checks of various systems and a review of take-off parameters of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft of Air India, owned by Tata Group.

Crash temperature reached 1,000 degree Celsius

The wreckage of the ill-fated London-bound Air India flight on the rooftop of the doctors' hostel, in Ahmedabad on Thursday. Efforts are underway to move the wreckage **PHOTO: ANI**

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday visited the site of the Air India plane crash, in which 265 people lost their lives, and met the injured at the civil hospital in Ahmedabad.

Modi arrived at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Airport in the morning. He spent around 20 minutes in-specting the site, where the London bound Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft (AI171) crashed into a complex of BJ Medical College in the Meghaninagar area shortly after taking off on Thursday afternoon.

Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu and Gujarat Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi informed the prime minister about how the plane crashed into the college hostel and mess.

Modi later visited the city civil hospital, where he spoke to Vishwas Kumar Ramesh, the lone plane survivor of the tragedy and also met other persons injured in the accident.

- A Black Box is a small device that records information about an aircraft during its flight. It helps in the investigation of aviation accidents. A Black Box is, however, not black, it's orange for visibility

The bodies of six victims were handed over to their families after identification on Friday, police said.

In the case of the other bodies, which are partially or fully charred, it will take around 72 hours to complete the exercise of matching their DNA samples, police inspector Chirag Gosai said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3,4

The plane stalled for a minute: Survivor

AHMEDABAD, 13 JUNE

Vishwas Kumar Ramesh, the sole survivor of the crash, said on Friday he managed to come out alive because the part of the plane where he was seated was close to the ground unlike other passengers and crew.

Ramesh, originally a native of coastal town of Diu adjoining Gujarat, said his seat, 11A, was close to an emergency door on the left side of the plane.

"For a brief moment, I felt I was about to die but when my eyes opened, I was alive. I unbuckled myself from the seat and exited from an opening," he said.

"In front of my eyes, air hostess and aunties and uncles had perished. Within a minute, it felt that the plane had stalled. Green and white lights were on. It looked that they were giving 'race' to the plane to give more thrust and the plane crashed into a building," he said. "It landed on ground. There was some space on my side. When door broke open, I could find a space and escape. I could not believe that I am alive. My left hand got burnt in the fire but I walked out of the crash site".

He is currently being treated at the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital.

"Others could not escape because there was a wall on that side, while there was a small gap where I was sitting. I still can't believe how I survived the crash," the Leicester resident said. *—PTI*

ISRAEL BOMBS IRAN'S NUCLEAR SITES

Tehran retaliates with drone; Israel killed Iran's military trio, 6 scientists

DUBAI, 13 JUNE

Israel attacked Iran's nuclear and missile sites early Friday, killing top military officers. The strikes raised the potential for an all-out war between the two bitter Middle East adversaries.

It was the most significant attack Iran has faced since its 1980s war with Iraq.

Iran quickly retaliated, sending a swarm of drones at Israel as Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned of "severe punishment".

Israel's military said about 200 aircraft were involved in the initial attack on about 100 targets. Two security officials said the country's Mossad spy agency was also able to position explosive drones in-side Iran ahead of time and then activate them to target missile launchers at an Iranian base near Teh-ran.

The attack hit several sites, including Iran's main nuclear enrichment facility at Natanz. Later in the morning, Israel said it had also destroyed dozens of radar installations and surface-to-air missile launchers in western Iran.

Among those killed were three of Iran's top military leaders, one who oversaw the entire armed forces, General Mohammad Bagheri, one who led the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, Gen. Hossein Salami, and another who ran the Guard's ballistic missile programme, General Amir Ali Hajizadeh.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) released a photo showing a site targeted by an Israel in the Tehran, Iran on Friday **PHOTO: X**

Khamenei said other top military officials and at least six scientists were also killed.

In its first response, Iran fired more than 100 drones at Israel, with both Iraq and Jordan confirming they had flown over their airspace. Israel said the drones were being intercepted outside its airspace, and it was not clear whether any got through.

US President Donald Trump again urged Iran to reach a deal with Washington on its nuclear pro-gramme, warning on his Truth Social platform that Israel's attacks "will only get worse". *—PTI*

>>>>More on Pages 4, 6

Indians in Iran, Israel urged to limit travel

TEHRAN/TEL AVIV 13 JUNE

Following Israel's air-strikes on Iran early Friday, the Indian embassies in Tehran and Tel Aviv have advised Indian nationals to remain alert and limit movement. In an advisory on X, the Indian Em-bassy in Tehran urged all Indian citizens and persons of Indian origin in Iran to "remain vigilant, avoid unnecessary movements, and follow local safety protocols." Similarly, the Indian Embassy in Israel advised Indians to "exercise caution, and stay close to safety shelters," urging them to follow guidelines issued by the Israeli Home Front Command.

16 AIR INDIA FLIGHT DIVERTED DUE TO IRAN AIRSPACE CLOSURE

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

Sixteen Air India flights were diverted as Iran's airspace closed. "Due to the emerging situation in Iran, the subsequent closure of its airspace and in view of the safety of our passengers, some of the Air India flights are either being diverted or are returning to their origin," Air India said. An AI flight heading to London returned to Mumbai after three hours in the air. The Mumbai-London flight, AI129, took off at 5.39am.

Among the other affected flights are AI130, diverted to Vienna, and AI102, redirected to Sharjah. The airline expressed regret for the inconvenience caused, offering accommodations, refunds, and alternative arrangements for stranded passengers.

NETANYAHU DIALS MODI, OTHER WORLD LEADERS

JERUSALEM, 13 JUNE

In a diplomatic push to garner international support for Israel's attacks against Iran, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke to his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, among many other world leaders, his office said on Friday.

Beginning last night, Netanyahu has held conversations with world leaders, including German Chancel-lor Friedrich Merz, Indian Prime Minister Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron, the Prime Min-ister's Office said in a brief statement.

He is due to speak with US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

"The leaders showed understanding for Israel's defence needs. The Prime Minister said that he would continue to be in contact with them in the coming days," it added.

Netanyahu's talk with Modi comes as weapon and jewellery trade reportedly grew by 33-fold from 2015-2024. In 2024, weapon trade between the two was reportedly at $185 million, from $5.6 million in 2015.

—PTI with agencies

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Internet outage disrupts Google, Spotify, others

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

A significant internet outage on Thursday disrupted platforms, including Google, Spotify, Snapchat, and Discord. The problem originated from a technical glitch in Google Cloud, which supports many online services. Google's own services, such as Gmail, Search, Maps, and Nest, were also affected, alongside third-party apps like Character.ai and the Pokémon Trading Card Game. By 12.41pm PT, Google reported that engineers had identified the issue and were working on solutions, although some regions still experienced slower response times. By 6.18pm PDT, Google confirmed that Vertex AI Online Prediction had fully recovered and all affected services were back to normal. A Cloud-flare representative indicated that the Google Cloud outage was the primary cause of the disruptions. Downdetector recorded over 11,000 reports from India and over 10,000 in the US. *—Agencies*

LANDSLIES AND FLASH FLOODS

Heavy rain lashes Uttara Kannada coast; 2 die in Belagavi tragedies

KARWAR/BELAGAVI 13 JUNE

- In Belagavi, a woman died after a house collapsed on her, while an auto driver was washed away in flash floods. Although operations are on to rescue him, he is presumed dead

Heavy downpour lashed Karwar and surrounding areas in Uttara Kannada district as several low-lying areas were submerged and hundreds of homes were inundated, officials said on Friday. Meanwhile, in Belagavi, flash floods washed away a driver and his auto rickshaw, while a house collapse killed a woman, police sources said.

Uttara Kannada

The relentless rain, which began on the night of 11 June, continued throughout Thursday. Key urban and rural areas of Karwar bore the brunt, with streets turning into streams and storm-water drains over-flowing, they said.

A landslide near Sai Mandir on Dobighat Road in the city in the wee hours of Thursday resulted in mas-sive boulders rolling down the hillside, prompting fears of further landslide. This comes close on the heels of a Geological Survey of India (GSI) report that identified 21 locations, including Karwar, as landslide-prone zones.

A car from Ankola plunged into a water-filled drain near Rangamandira in Karwar after losing visibility. The vehicle and its driver were recovered using an excavator.

Belagavi

Belagavi Superintendent of Police Bhimashankar Guled said that 65-year-old women, Pakirawwa Haveri, was killed on the spot after her house collapsed when she was asleep in the wee hours of Friday. Neighbours, found her caught under the debris and attempted to rescue her.

She was declared dead at the government hospital in Gokak.

This was the second death in region. Earlier, 30-year-old Manjula Balasaheb Patil from Bananagar in Tikota taluk of Vijaypura district was killed when her house collapsed on her on 9 June, 2025.

In another incident, flash floods washed an auto driver and his vehicle to a water passage on the outskirts of Chikkabadanur in Yaragatti taluk on Thursday night.

People who saw the incident, threw rope to him in an attempt to rescue him, in vain. Guled said that police, fire fighter and emergency service staff were searching for him on Friday morning. "We are still searching him, hope he alive." *—Salar News with agencies*

>>>>More on Page 2

A logged underpass at Cantonment in Bengaluru, on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Three killed in Belagavi road accident

BELAGAVI, 13 JUNE

Three people were killed in a road accident when a truck carrying bricks and a passenger vehicle collided near Banajwad College on Vijaypura–Sankeshwar state highway near Athani town in Belagavi district late on Thursday night, Police said. This included a person who was hit by a speeding vehicle as he rushed to help the victims of the crash.The victims have been identified as truck driver Mahesh Subhash Gatade, 30, from Ganeshwadi; his assistant Shivam Yuvaraj Chauhan, 24, from Pudawad and Sachin Vilas Mali, 42, from Kavalapur who went to help them. All victims hailed from Maharashtra Eyewitnesses said Mali was hit by an Innova car. The Athani police have launched a search for the car and its driver.

—Salar News

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Nigerian woman caught in City with Rs 10cr MDMA

BENGALURU, 13 JUNE

A Nigerian woman was arrested in the City with over 5.3kg of MDMA crystals worth Rs 10 crore, police said on Friday. Acting on a tip-off, the Central Crime Branch's anti-narcotics unit detained her on 10 June in Tarahunase village near Rajanukunte. She had entered India on a student visa in 2021 but was never enrolled at the Telangana college she claimed to attend. During questioning, she admitted to transporting drugs from Delhi to Bengaluru hidden in new clothing materials and supplying them to local peddlers. Police have registered a case at Chikkajala station and are searching for her accomplice. A major anti-drugs rally is planned in the city on 26 June.

—PTI

Konkani students to get preference in scholarships

MANGALURU, 13 JUNE

The World Konkani Centre has announced that students who have studied Konkani as a third language in schools across the State will be given preference for its engineering and medical scholarship programme, from this year. Nandagopal Shenoy, President of the Vishwa Konkani Kendra, said eligible students must register on the official website. Applicants are required to submit supporting documents, including PUC II marks card, a certificate from the school headmaster confirming the study of Konkani, proof of college admission, fee structure, CET/NEET scores, and registration details, to the Secretary, World Konkani Scholarship Fund, World Konkani Centre, Mangaluru. *—PTI*

CM seeks more of Central tax pool, ₹1.15T for City

Highlights unequal tax distribution with Finance Commission

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met with 16th Finance Commission Chairman Arvind Panagariya on Friday, demanding a larger allocation for the State from the central tax pool for the five-year period beginning 1 April, 2026.

In the memorandum submitted, Siddaramaiah proposed that the share of taxes devolved to states (vertical devolution) be increased to at least 50 per cent, and that cesses and surcharges be capped at 5 per cent. The State also recommended including Union non-tax revenues in the divisible pool.

For sharing funds among states (horizontal devolution), the memorandum suggested that each state retain about 60 per cent of what it contributes, with 40 per cent going to less-developed states — ensuring both growth and equity.

The CM sought support for Rs 1.15 lakh crore investment to strengthen City's infrastructure, given its major role in the State.

"The meeting was very cordial and the Chairman was very receptive to our demands. I have submitted an additional memorandum seeking higher allocation to the State from the central tax pool," Siddaramaiah said after the meeting. "The Centre collects cess and surcharge on various commodities. We don't have a share in it. It is kept by the Government of India. If they collect more than 5 per cent (of cess) it should come under the divisible pool."

Siddaramaiah noted the State's share of central tax revenues dropped significantly under the 15th Finance Commission (2021-26) to 3.64 per cent, down from 4.71 per cent during the 14th Finance Commission period (2015-20).

The overall share allocated to all states from central taxes was reduced to 41 per cent for 2021-26, as against 42 per cent in the previous cycle, primarily due to the creation of Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. This resulted in both a percentage and absolute decline in the State's tax allocation.

Siddaramaiah was accompanied by Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, Principal Secretary of Finance Ritesh Singh, and other State officials. The Commission is tasked with recommending tax revenue distribution between the central government and states for 2026-31.

—Salar News with Agencies

State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with the 16th Finance Commission Chairperson Arvind Panagariya and other members during a meeting, in New Delhi, Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

The memorandum proposes

- 50% share of taxes be devolved to states
- 5% cap on cess and surcharges.
- Each state must get 60% of financial resources it contributes

RED ALERT CONTINUES

Uttara Kannada taluks receive more than 100mm rain

KARWAR, 13 JUNE

Rains continued to wreak havoc across Uttara Kannada districts, particularly hurting Karwar.

Roads near MG Road, Geetanjali Cinema, High Church area, Kodibag, and the Sai Katte stretch resembled rivers, with water entering shops, temples, and homes in Karwar.

Rita Fernandes, a resident of Kodibag whose home was flooded, voiced strong dissatisfaction with the lack of official response.

"Six homes were under water near the Kodibeer Temple. We had to shift elderly people and children to relatives' homes overnight. Our refrigerator, television, beds, rice, and lentils--all got soaked. Neighbours gave us food, but we don't know where to go now. Despite all this, not a single elected representative or official has visited us," she said.

A red alert remains in place till 14 June, and heavy rains are forecast to continue till 18 June.According to official figures recorded till Friday morning, rainfall totals (in mm) in major taluks stood at: Karwar 128.3; Bhatkal 125.6; Honnavar 113.2; Kumta 80.5; Ankola 60.3; and others with moderate showers. A red alert remains in place till 14 June, and heavy rains are forecast to continue till 18 June.

The district administration has declared holidays for all Anganwadis, primary, and high schools across the coastal taluks of Karwar, Ankola, Kumta, Honnavar, and Bhatkal in view of widespread rainfall till today.

In the last 24 hours, about 0.75 hectares of horticultural crops have been reported damaged.

In view of the landslide risks, the Deputy Commissioner has banned the parking of all types of vehicles along vulnerable stretches of National Highways from 12 June until the end of the monsoon. The National Highways Authority has been directed to install warning signs and safety measures at critical points. *—PTI*

Rains in Karwar **PHOTO: X**

SC seeks State's response on 'Thug Life'; HC raps producers

NEW DELHI/BENGALURU, 13 JUNE

The Supreme Court of India has sought a response from the Karnataka government regarding a plea for protection against threats to the screening of Kamal Haasan's film 'Thug Life'.

A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Manmohan responded to the urgent nature of the matter by issuing notices to the State government, the State police, Raaj Kamal Films International Private Limited, and the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC). The plea highlights violent threats against linguistic minorities, with the petitioner's counsel arguing that no action has been taken by state authorities and that they have allegedly aligned with extremist elements.

Despite the film being certified by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), the petition asserts that ongoing threats have created an effective ban in the State, which violates the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

The court will review the case next week.

State HC raps producers

The Karnataka High Court noted on the same day that the actor Kamal Haasan is yet to issue an apology for comments he made stating that "Kannada was born out of Tamil." The court directed the producer of 'Thug Life' to address an application by the Kannada Sahitya Parishat, which seeks to present cultural concerns regarding the actor's statements.

The producer requested a week to file objections, while the court previously critiqued Haasan, suggesting that a simple apology could have alleviated the situation.

The State High Court has scheduled the next hearing for 20 June. *—Agencies*

TO EASE TENSIONS

HM inaugurates communal action force

MANGALURU, 13 JUNE

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Friday inaugurated the office of the Special Action Force (SAF) here, a specialised unit aimed at curbing communal violence and maintaining public order in the coastal region.

Speaking at the event, Parameshwara said the decision to set up the SAF was taken in the wake of recurring incidents of violence in Dakshina Kannada, including a recent murder that led to tensions across the district.

He noted that while the region is culturally rich and home to a literate and peaceful population, it has been plagued by "atmospheres of hatred and communal polarisation".

"The SAF is India's first force formed specifically to address communal disharmony," he said, adding that the force was constituted within a week of the proposal, following inputs from local police officials and former Commissioner Kuldeep Kumar Jain. "If people stay calm, this force will remain inactive. But if they don't, it will have to act".

Dakshina Kannada district in-charge Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, who was also present, said the SAF marks a step to address "the only dark spot in an otherwise progressive Dakshina Kannada and Udupi." *—PTI*

BJP'S SRIVATSA FLAYS CAUVERY AARATHI PLAN

MYSURU, 13 JUNE

The BJP's Krishnaraja MLA TS Srivatsa on Friday opposed the state government's proposal to organise Cauvery Aarathi by spending nearly Rs 100 core in the vicinity of Krishna Raja Sagara (KRS) dam, in lines with Gangarathi.

Speaking to media persons in Mysuru, Srivatsa criticised the State government's move and said its intention is to woo Hindus. He said the Congress wants to lift the party's sinking image as the Hindu community was upset over its anti-Hindu stance.

Srivatsa said such events should not be held in the vicinity of the KRS dam, which holds immense historical and ecological significance, as it also threatens century-old heritage structures.

The century-old dam is surrounded by natural beauty and should not be subjected to commercial or entertainment-oriented projects that could harm its sanctity, Srivatsa said.

"Instead of conducting such an event, the government should provide Rs 1 crore to each Assembly segment to repair roads damaged by rains," said Srivatsa, who also objected to tourism projects in the area. *—Salar News*

CM urges Union Agri Minister to aid mango farmers

BENGALURU, 13 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday requested Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shivaraj Singh Chouhan for an urgent Price Deficiency Payment (PDPS) under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for mango farmers in the State.

He intended to draw Chouhan's attention to the "severe distress" being faced by mango farmers across State due to a sharp decline in market prices during the current harvest season.

"Mango is one of Karnataka's major horticultural crops, cultivated over an area of approximately 1.39 lakh hectares with estimated production of 8-10 lakh metric tonne this Rabi season, particularly in Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru Urban, Chikkaballapura, Kolar, and Bengaluru South districts," Siddaramaiah said in a letter.

Noting that during the peak harvest months of May to July, heavy market arrivals have led to substantial price fluctuations, he said. Market prices, which earlier hovered around Rs 12,000 per quintal, have now plummeted to as low as Rs 3,000 per quintal, while the Karnataka State Agriculture Price Commission has recommended the cost of cultivation at Rs 5,466 per quintal.

"Necessary directions may also be issued to designated central procurement agencies such as NAFED and NCCF to initiate procurement operations immediately at an appropriate intervention price, ensuring that farmers receive at least the minimum cost of cultivation as a safety net," he said.

Siddaramaiah had earlier written to his Andhra Pradesh counterpart, Chandrababu Naidu, urging him to withdraw the ban on entry of "Totapuri Mangoes" from Karnataka into Chittoor district of his state. *—PTI*

LANDMARK SCHEME

Shakti Scheme redefined women's empowerment

DK SHIVAKUMAR
DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

In State and national politics, we often hear a lot about women's empowerment. When a woman is empowered, her entire family, society, and the nation itself are strengthened. As BR Ambedkar, the architect of our Constitution, said — "If you want to measure the progress of any community, you should measure it by the progress of its women."

Governments come up with several schemes for women's empowerment, but many either fall through due to lack of commitment or remain unimplemented.

However, among the five major guarantees promised by the Congress government, the 'Shakti' scheme has emerged as one of the most impactful.

No other government has dared to launch a programme like this — making public transport completely free for women and taking on the enormous recurring financial burden every month. The Congress government, under Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, introduced this scheme. Typically, most government schemes see enthusiasm only in the beginning, but the 'Shakti' scheme has only grown in popularity even after two and a half years, women across the State continuing to bless us for it.

The women who voted us into power (in 2023) had the right to demand. Even though the government had just been formed, we wasted no time in rolling out this scheme. As a result, women gained financial power — not only reducing their personal expenses but also eliminating the family's transportation costs. The 'Shakti' scheme has become a catalyst for women's empowerment in the State.

Success in crores

Since the implementation of the scheme, women in the State have made 476 crore free journeys. To facilitate this, our government spent Rs 12,015 crore over the past two-and-a-half years towards women's travel.

Of this, KSRTC recorded 144.46 crore free rides, incurring a cost of Rs 4,563.87 crore. BMTC saw 150.94 crore rides, costing Rs 2,064.68 crore. The North-Western Road Transport Corporation registered 111.27 crore journeys, amounting to Rs 2,973.46 crore, while the Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation facilitated 68.87 crore rides, with an expenditure of Rs 2,412.26 crore.

At first, some critics dismissed the free bus travel as an unnecessary expense, claiming women would use it for leisure travel. But in reality, lakhs of working women now commute without spending a single rupee. Students travel without financial worries. Women who longed to visit pilgrimage centres have fulfilled their spiritual wishes. This scheme has conveyed a clear message — it's time to move beyond the regressive notion that women belong only in the kitchen.

A World Bank study found that in many South Asian countries, poor families spend about 20 per cent of their monthly income on transportation.

Because of this, many women avoid traveling for jobs or other purposes, staying confined to their homes. The 'Shakti' scheme has made commuting easier and safer for working women.

Poor women used to save money throughout the year to visit holy places like Male Madeswar. For the past two years, no one has worried about money. Due to women visiting temples, the income of over 1 lakh religious centres including the State's 34,565 Muzarai temples has increased. While temples' hundi collections were Rs 8.48 crore in 2022-23, it became Rs 9.59 crore in 2023-24. In 2024-25, this has reached Rs 18.08 crore. This means the Shakti sheme enabled temple development.

The Opposition has been waiting, hoping the government will withdraw these guarantees. But the Congress party has never gone back on its promises. This scheme will not only continue with even greater efficiency but also serve as a national model.

When the 'Shakti' scheme was first launched, an elderly woman blessed our government by bowing at the bus steps. Women sang songs in buses celebrating this free service. It's on the strength of those blessings and well-wishes that Congress has further fortified its guarantees.

The writer is Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka

An elderly woman bows as she enters the bus before taking her first free ticket from Dharwad to Bailhongal, in 2023 **PHOTO: X@AmitSUpadhye**

BROKEN LIVES AND HEAVY HEARTS

An Eid visit, a family trip, another day at work for a crew member, it all ended in the ill-fated AI flight

Pilot Kunder a family friend not cousin: Massey

BENGALURU, 13 JUNE

Actor Vikrant Massey cleared a misunderstanding that Clive Kunder, a victim and one of the pilots of the ill-fated plane that crashed in Ahmedabad, was a close family friend and not his cousin as was believed by some. "Dear friends in the media and elsewhere, the unfortunately deceased Mr Clive Kunder was not my cousin. The Kunders are our family friends. Requests no more speculations and let the family and loved ones grieve in peace," he said on Instagram. In an earlier post, Massey expressed his grief at Kunder's death, calling him the son of his uncle, Clifford Kunder. —Agencies

Guj ex-CM's lucky number turns into doomsday

AHMEDABAD, 13 JUNE

Gujarat's former chief minister Vijay Rupani used to consider 1206 as his lucky number and ensured that it featured on all vehicles that he owned over the years. The number has now become synonymous with one of the worst aviation tragedies in India's history, and the one in which he lost his life along with more than 260 others on Thursday. Rupani was travelling visit his daughter in London. His wife Anjaliben was also there. Anjaliben reached Gandhinagar on Friday. —PTI

Relative of a victim of the Air India plane crash mourns at a hospital, in Ahmedabad, on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

MUMBAI, 13 JUNE

A good member of society is how a family friend of Captain Sumeet Sabharwal, one of the pilots of the ill-fated Air India flight that crashed in Ahmedabad, described him, expressing shock and disbelief at his death.

Captain Sabharwal was among 265 people killed in Thursday's deadly accident, which saw a Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft (AI171) with 230 passengers and 12 crew members crashed into the complex of a med-ical college moments after taking off from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmeda-bad on Thursday afternoon.

Sabharwal lived with his father, Pushkaraj, in the Powai area in Mumbai.

Deepak Pathak, one of the crew members who perished in the crash, hailed from Badlapur in Thane district but had recently moved to Ghatkopar to ease his daily commute.

Pathak was a committed professional with over a decade of service in the aviation sector, said a family friend.

Friends of Irfan Shaikh, a crew member from Pimpri Chinchwad in Pune district, said the 22-year-old had only recently come home to celebrate Eid.

Aparna Mahadik resided in a housing society in Goregaon, Mumbai, where several airline staff lived.

"When we learnt of the accident, we prayed no one from our building would be involved. But sadly, I was wrong," Mahadik's neighbour Akhilesh Chaube said.

The tragedy also struck the family of Javed Ali, a Mumbai-born man who had come from London with his wife Mariam, a UK national, and their two children, Zian and Amin.

All four died in the crash on their way back to the UK.

Arjun Patolia resident of London lived with his wife Bharati and their two daughters, aged eight and four.

According to closed ones, his wife died a few days ago and he had come to India to immerse his wife's ashes in a pond in her ancestral village as per her last wish.

—PTI with Agencies

Trip to visit son turned fatal for elderly couple

PUNE, 13 JUNE

An elderly couple hailing from Maharashtra's Solapur district was on the ill-fated plane that crashed in Ahmedabad to meet their son in London and, an official said. Mahadev Pawar, 68, and his wife Asha, 60, hailed from Hatid village in Sangola tehsil of Solapur. An official of Solapur district administration said they had been living in Ahmedabad. One of the sons lives in London. "The couple was on the plane to visit their son," official said. *—PTI*

Newly-wed's dreams of happy future shattered

AHMEDABAD, 13 JUNE

Ankita Patel was looking forward to beginning her new life in the UK with her husband, whom she had only spent 12 days with after their wedding in December last year. Thursday's deadly crash shattered all the dreams and hopes for a happy future Ankita carried with her.

Ankita had been busy completing the visa process for the last six months and was all set to join her hus-band, Vasant,30, who runs a provision store in the UK. *—PTI*

Cabin attendant mourns best friend's loss

MUMBAI, 13 JUNE

For 21 years the noise of an airplane engine was the backdrop to an unbreakable friendship between two Air India cabin attendants, including Shradha Dhavan, who was on board the ill-fated plane.

They always spoke after every landing or before the takeoff of a flight.

Dhawan's close friend (name withheld) was at a loss for words after losing her friend.

Both friends planned to retire together and go on vacations. *—PTI*

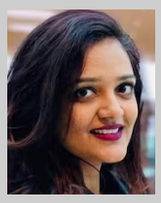
AI crew Lamnunthem Singson was sole breadwinner of family

IMPHAL/ KANGPOKPI, 13 JUNE

Twenty-six-year-old Lamnunthem Singson, who was one of the two crew members from Manipur was killed in the crash in Ahmedabad, was the sole earning member of her family. She had last talked to her widowed mother over the phone on 11 June, informing about flight to London on Thursday. *—PTI*

Lone Canadian killed in plane crash was Indian-origin dentist

OTTAWA, 13 JUNE



The Canadian citizen killed in the crash in Ahmedabad is Indian-origin dentist Nirali Patel, CTV News Toronto said on Thursday. Patel, 32, who lived in Etobicoke, Toronto, was travelling back after a "social trip", it said. She was in India for around five days. Her husband and child are planning to travel to India. *—PTI*

Elderly Kurukshetra couple's daughter a victim of the crash

KURUKSHETRA, 13 JUNE

Anju Sharma, 55, whose parents live in Ramsaran Majra in Haryana's Kurukshetra district, was among the victims of Air India plane crashein Ahmedabad on Thursday. She was travelling to London to meet her elder daughter. Anju's uncle Balkishan Sharma said her parents are yet to be informed of the tragedy. *—PTI*

A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Vishwashkumar Ramesh, the lone survivor of the Air India AI-171 flight crash, at a hospital in Ahmedabad, on Friday **PHOTO: ANI**

11A, the economy class seat of lone survivor

AHMEDABAD, 13 JUNE

"11A" was one of the 238 economy class seats in the ill-fated Air India Dreamliner that crashed on 12 June, killing 241 people onboard and leaving just one survivor, a British national Vishwash Kumar Ramesh.

Ramesh, 45, was the occupant of '11A'.

The Boeing 787-8 aircraft, operating the Ahmedabad-London AI171 flight, had 242 people onboard, including 12 crew members.

The seat map showed '11A' to be the window seat near an emergency exit door as well as the aircraft gal-ley area.

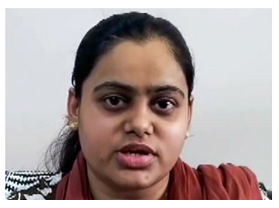
While it might be too early to conclude on the factors that helped Ramesh exit the aircraft that went up in flames, being seated near emergency exit door could be one of reasons for his miraculous escape.

The 27 B787-8 planes in the Air India fleet, each having 238 economy and 18 business class seats, will go for retrofit in the coming months.

"The good news is that one person survived the crash...," Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said after meeting Ramesh and visiting the crash site. *—PTI*

How traffic saved the life of a Gujarat woman

AHMEDABAD/ MUMBAI, 13 JUNE



Bhumi Chauhan, who moved to London two years ago on a study visa and is currently in India, is thanking God and her stars for missing the ill-fated Air India plane that crashed in Ahmedabad as she got stuck in traffic and reached the airport late.

Chauhan said she missed boarding the AI 171 flight to London, which crashed soon after taking-off on Thursday afternoon from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, by just 10 minutes.

She is visiting her hometown Ahmedabad for the first time after moving to the UK two years ago.

"I am shivering after I learnt about the crash. I left the airport at 1.30pm as I missed the flight due to traf-fic. I thank God," Chauhan told Republic TV.

She said she was in India for vacation and scheduled to go back to London on the flight which took off at 1.39pm and crashed into a medical college complex near the Ahmedabad airport and burst into a ball of fire less than a minute after take-off. *— PTI*

POLITICAL BLAME GAME

Union Home Minister Amit Shah visits an injured person at a hospital **PHOTO: PTI**

Congress terms Shah's remarks about the crash as 'insensitive'

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

The Congress on Friday termed Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks in Ahmedabad following a plane crash "insensitive", and said the least he could offer is a promise of accountability, not a "shrug and a lecture on fate".

Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said Shah's "nobody can stop accidents" re-mark was an abdication.

"When a plane crashes..... the least a home minister can offer is a promise of accountability....

.....Aviation accidents..... are preventable. That's why we have aviation regulators, safety protocols, and crisis response systems," Khera said on X.

There was no immediate reaction to Khera's remarks from the BJP.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that Shah's remarks were very insensitive.

Shah had said that the temperature in the Air India plane was so high due to burning fuel that there was no chance of saving anyone.

The plane was loaded with 1.25 lakh litre of fuel for the long journey.

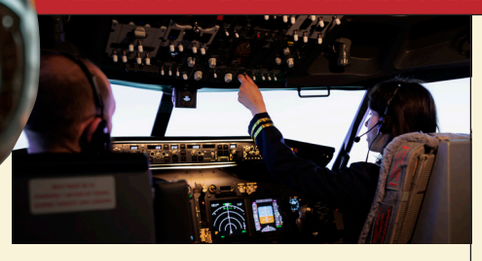
Expressing condolences to the relatives of those, Shah said he would meet the lone survivor of the crash. *—PTI*

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

How is a Boeing aircraft maintained?

For aircraft, the term maintenance means the inspection, overhaul, repair, upkeep and preservation of an aircraft and engine, including the replacement of parts.

HERE IS HOW BOEING AIRCRAFT ARE MAINTAINED: The owner/operator is responsible for the maintenance of his aircraft and engine.



THE PILOT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Determining whether the aircraft is safe.
- Having a Registration Certificate and a valid Airworthiness Certificate appropriately displayed in the aircraft.
- Have an FAA-approved flight manual or operational limitations in the aircraft.
- Keeping abreast of current regulations.

INSPECTIONS
The owner/operator must do the required inspections by having any air-worthiness defects corrected. The maintenance personnel then enter their work in the aircraft records. Most aircraft need some type of pre-ventive maintenance after every 25 hours of flying time and minor maintenance at least every 100 hours.

ANNUAL INSPECTION
This inspection must be performed within the pre-ceding 12 calendar months.

DAILY AND PREFLIGHT INSPECTION
The owner or operator may conduct a daily inspection, if so desired, but the pilot must perform a satisfac-tory preflight inspection before flight.

100-HOUR INSPECTION
An aircraft used to carry passengers for hire must be inspected within each 100 hours of time in service by either a certified A&P mechanic, an appropriately rated certificated repair station or the manufacturer.

AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES
Airworthiness Directives, commonly referred to as "AD Notes," provide aircraft owners with information of unsafe conditions. It is the aircraft owner or operator's responsibility to assure compliance with all perti-nent AD notes.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE
Preventive maintenance means simple or minor preservation operations and the replacement of small standard parts not involving complex assembly operations. The holder of a pilot certificate issued under FAR 61 may perform preventive maintenance.

PROGRESSIVE MAINTENANCE
This is a continuous maintenance programme where the required FAA and manufacturer inspections are accomplished during the most convenient time, while keeping the aircraft in a state of continu-ous airworthiness.

IIT-Kharagpur student held for 'raping' 13-yr-old

THANE/BHARATPUR, 13 JUNE

A 23-year-old student from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, was apprehended in Thane for allegedly raping a 13-year-old girl with a disability. The accused reportedly lured the girl with new clothes and assaulted her, and evidence from his mobile phone revealed videos of the incident alongside other objectionable material. Meanwhile, in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district, a 15-year-old girl was reportedly raped by a youth named Rohit and three accomplices. The girl was forcibly taken to a rented room, where Rohit allegedly bound and assaulted her under the watch of his friends. A suspicious neighbour alerted the girl's father, leading to the police investigation and arrest of accused *—PTI*

Farmhouses, illegal structures razed in Haryana's Aravalli

FARIDABAD, 13 JUNE

In a concerted effort to combat illegal construction in the protected Aravalli region, the Faridabad Municipal Corporation, in collaboration with the forest department, has demolished ten farmhouses and five illegal structures at Anangpur village in Haryana's Faridabad and will extended the demolitions to Lakkadpur, Ankheer, and Mewala Maharajpur villages. Authorities reported the operation targeted illegal properties valued in crores on the route from Anand Van to Aravalli, clearing approximately ten acres of land. Following a Supreme Court directive mandating the removal of unlawful buildings in the Aravalli, reports indicate over 6,793 encroachments have been identified for removal in a drone survey. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Air India diverts 16 flights amid Iran airspace closure

MUMBAI, 13 JUNE

Sixteen long- and ultra-long haul Air India flights were diverted on Friday following Israel's offensive against Iran, which resulted in the closure of Iranian airspace. The airline issued a travel advisory, stating that arrangements are being made to transport affected passengers to their final destinations. The strikes targeted key facilities in Tehran, including nuclear sites and military infrastructure. Flight AI130 from London Heathrow to Mumbai was redirected to Vienna, while AI102 from New York to Delhi was diverted to Sharjah. Additionally, AI116 from New York to Mumbai was rerouted to Jeddah. *—PTI*

2 NDA candidates from Assam enter Rajya Sabha

GUWAHATI, 13 JUNE

BJP's Kanad Purkayastha and Asom Gana Parishad's Birendra Prasad Baishya have been elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Assam, as no opposition parties nominated candidates for the elections. The official announcement confirmed their election, noting that the last date for nominations was Thursday. The elections for the two seats were initially set for 19 June. Purkayastha, who will make his parliamentary debut, is the son of veteran BJP leader and former union minister Kabindra Purkayastha and serves as the BJP's state unit secretary. Baishya, a seasoned AGP leader and former union minister, will be joining the Rajya Sabha for the third time. The elections were called due to the expiration of terms for Baishya and BJP's Ranjan Das on 14 June. Assam has seven Rajya Sabha seats, with four held by the BJP and its allies. *—PTI*

Monsoon to hit most parts of NW-India by 25 June

Kerala witnessed earliest onset since 2009 on 24 May

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

The southwest monsoon is expected to cover most parts of northwest India, including Delhi, by 25 June.

The primary rain-bearing system reached Kerala on 24 May, marking its earliest onset over the Indian mainland since 2009.

Aided by strong low-pressure systems over the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, the monsoon advanced quickly, covering parts up to central Maharashtra and the entire northeast.

The lack of rainfall since early June resulted in rising temperatures, triggering heatwave conditions across northwest and central India.

The monsoon will cover the remaining parts of central and eastern India and northwest India by 18 June, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Aided by strong low-pressure systems over the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, the monsoon advanced quickly in some regions *PHOTO: PTI*

It is expected to advance over most of northwest India from 19 June to 25.

The monsoon is influenced by complex global, regional and local factors, marked by significant variability.

India is likely to receive 106 per cent of the long-period average rainfall of 87cm between June and September.

Above-normal rainfall is expected in most parts of the country, except Ladakh, adjoining areas of Himachal Pradesh, the northeast and some parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha. Some isolated areas in Punjab, Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu may record below-normal rainfall.

Thunderstorm and rain were forecast for Delhi later on Friday, bringing some respite to residents amidst intense heatwave condition. While the minimum temperature was 31 degrees Celsius on Friday, the city's maximum temperature reached around 42 degrees Celsius.

Pre-monsoon activity might begin from 14 June in different parts of Rajasthan facing intense heatwave conditions. Parts of Udaipur, Kota, and Bharatpur divisions might witness heavy thunderstorms and rain on Friday afternoon. *—PTI*

AXIOM-4 LAUNCH DELAY

Mission integrity and safety hold top priority, says ISRO

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday said safety and mission integrity were its top priority as National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Axiom Space addressed an issue related to a leak at the International Space Station (ISS).

India's Shubhanshu Shukla and three other astronauts will travel to the ISS as part of the Axiom-4 commercial mission that has been put on indefinite delay, as space agencies address various issues that have cropped up ahead of the launch.

"Safety and mission integrity remain our top priorities," ISRO chairman V Narayanan said on X.

ISRO is working closely with Axiom Space, NASA and SpaceX, as they responsibly address the ISS Zvezda module observation causing the delay.

The astronauts were originally scheduled for lift-off on 29 May, which was put off thrice, when SpaceX, the providers of the launch rocket and the space capsule, detected a liquid oxygen leak in the Falcon-9 rocket.

India's Shubhanshu Shukla and three other astronauts will travel to the ISS as part of the Axiom-4 mission *PHOTO: X/SPACEX*

Former NASA astronaut and director of human spaceflight at Axiom Space, Peggy Whitson, will command the commercial mission, while Shukla will serve as pilot.

The two mission specialists are European Space Agency project astronauts, Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland and Tibor Kapu of Hungary.

The 14-day mission will "realise the return" to human spaceflight for India, Poland and Hungary. *—PTI*

'Hitmen planned to murder woman, pass off as Sonam'

SHILLONG, 13 JUNE

The killers of Indore-based businessman Raja Raghuvanshi had a plan to murder any woman and burn her body to pass it as that of his wife Sonam so that she would be able to be in hiding for a few more days till the truth is known, a Meghalaya police officer said.

The police also found that Raj Kushwaha, a suspected boyfriend of Sonam, was the mastermind in the murder plot, and she is the co-conspirator. The interrogation of Sonam, Raj and three others, who were arrested in connection with the murder, revealed that she fled from Meghalaya in a burqa and reached the Madhya Pradesh city using various modes of transport like taxi, bus and train.

Sonam Raghuvanshi being escorted to a district court in Ghazipur on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

"The conspiracy to eliminate Raja was hatched in Indore, shortly before his wedding with Sonam on 11 May, and the woman had agreed to the plot," said East Khasi Hills Superintendent of Police Vivek Syiem.

The victim's elder brother Sachin on Friday sought a narco analysis on Sonam and Raj. "We want the Meghalaya police to conduct a narco test on Sonam and Kushwaha so that the full truth behind my brother's murder comes out," he said. *—PTI*

Internet curbs extended after Odisha clashes

BHADRAK, 13 JUNE

The Odisha government extended the suspension of internet services in parts of the Bhadrak district till Friday evening, a restriction imposed since June 12 following the death of a man in a clash over cattle smuggling.

District magistrate-cum-collector Dilip Routrai the situation was "well under control and there is no untoward incident so far. We keeping a close watch on the situation." The administration suspended the internet services to prevent the spread of misinformation and maintain peace, said Eastern Range Director General of Police Satyajit Nayak. The violence erupted after the death of Santosh Parida, 45, of Kasati village during a clash over cattle smuggling. *—PTI*

Gas gushes from Assam ONGC well on day 2

SIVASAGAR, 13 JUNE

Gas is flowing uncontrollably for the second day on Friday from a crude well of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) in Assam's Sivasagar district after a blowout on 12 June.

While ONGC is trying to ascertain the cause for the blowout, the process to control the well is progressing.

The incident took place at an old crude oil well of Rig No SKP 135 of Rudrasagar oil field of ONGC, located in Bhatiyapara. A private firm SK Petro Services operated the well on behalf of the state-owned Maharatna company.

ONGC in a statement said gushes of gas were observed from the well on 12 June during servicing operations at the unit.

Reinforcement teams and technical specialists reached the spot to safely normalise the well operations. A perforation job was underway for zone transfer at the time of blowout of the well that was out of production. *—PTI*

ED conducts fresh raids in Bihar tenders case

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has launched fresh investigations into a money laundering case involving an alleged nexus between contractors and bureaucrats in Bihar. Fresh searches were executed at nine locations across Patna, Muzaffarpur (Bihar), Surat (Gujarat), and Panipat (Haryana) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), targeting Patna-based contractor Rishu Shree.

The ED revealed that several "incriminating" items and documents were seized during Thursday's raids, which focused on individuals and travel agents associated with the contractor. It has been alleged that the contractor has connections with multiple government officials to secure tenders for various government departments, including water resources. *—PTI*

India urges Iran, Israel to desist from escalation

Smoke rises up after an explosion in Tehran *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

India on Friday said it is "deeply concerned" over the recent developments between Iran and Israel and "closely monitoring" the evolving situation. New Delhi urged both countries to avoid any escalatory steps.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also said all Indian nationals in the region are advised to exercise caution, stay safe and follow local security advisories.

"We are deeply concerned at the recent developments between Iran and Israel. We are closely monitoring the evolving situation, including reports related to attacks on nuclear sites," the MEA said.

India also urged both sides to avoid any escalatory steps. The MEA said, "Existing channels of dialogue and diplomacy should be utilised to work towards a de-escalation of the situation and resolving underlying issues".

India asserted that it stands ready to extend all possible support. "Our Missions in both countries are in contact with the Indian community. All Indian nationals are advised to exercise caution and follow local security advisories," the MEA said. *—PTI*

India, China to rebuild ties through people-centric engagements

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong in New Delhi on 12 June during his two-day visit to India. The discussions primarily focused on reviewing recent developments in India-China bilateral relations since their last meeting in Beijing on 27 January, 2025. Both sides expressed their commitment to stabilising and rebuilding ties, particularly through people-centric engagements.

Misri commended China's cooperation in facilitating

The 193-member UN General Assembly. *PHOTO: ANI*

the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra this year and raised the topic of hydrological data sharing, expressing hopes for progress in this area following the April meeting on transboundary rivers. The Foreign Secretary underscored the importance of resuming direct air services and the early conclusion of an updated Air Services Agreement.

Additionally, both nations discussed practical steps for visa facilitation and promoting exchanges among media and think tanks. They also noted plans to commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations positively.

In the context of trade, India is actively communicating with China to ensure a stable supply of rare earth metals, crucial for various industries, following recent export controls imposed by China. *—ANI*

India abstains from UN voting on Gaza

UN, 13 JUNE

India has abstained from a United Nations General Assembly vote on a resolution demanding an "immediate, unconditional and permanent" ceasefire in Gaza. The resolution, introduced by Spain, passed with overwhelming support — 149 votes in favour, 19 abstentions, and 12 votes against. It called for the end of hostilities, the release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups, and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, explained that India's abstention aligns with its consistent stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict. He reaffirmed India's deep concern over the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza and stressed the need for protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law.

Harish reiterated India's longstanding support for a two-state solution and called for renewed direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine. *—PTI*

Haryana edu dept to conduct official work in Hindi

CHANDIGARH, 13 JUNE

Haryana Education Minister Mahipal Dhanda said all work under his department should be done in Hindi as a majority of the state's population speaks the language and it was the "national language".

Dhanda said in Kurukshetra on Wednesday that people will benefit if government correspondence was done in Hindi.

India does not have a national language. Hindi is among the 22 official languages of the country.

Addressing media persons during an event on Narendra Modi's 11 years as PM, Dhanda said, "Hindi is our national language. Why should we work in English? I don't know English...though I can understand it somewhat.... In our state, 90 per cent of the people are far removed from English."

Dhanda said the vast majority of people will not understand government correspondence if it is done in English. "We cannot do injustice to 90-95 per cent people for 5-7 per cent people."

"So, I said my department will do all work in Hindi so that everyone understands what is written. I would prefer it if all work in Haryana is done in Hindi," he said. *—PTI*

SC GUARDS FREE SPEECH

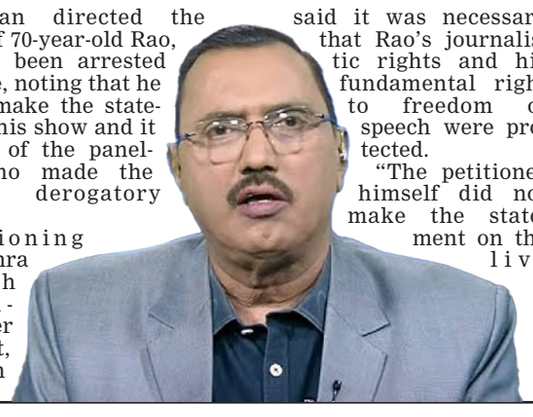
Scribe gets bail in Amaravati offensive remarks case

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to senior journalist Kommineni Srinivasa Rao, whom the Andhra Pradesh police had arrested for allegedly making disparaging remarks against greenfield capital city Amaravati on his live show.

The top court passed the order on Rao's plea challenging his arrest.

A partial working day bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Manmohan directed the release of 70-year-old Rao, who had been arrested on 9 June, noting that he did not make the statement on his show and it was one of the panellists, who made the alleged derogatory remarks.



Questioning the Andhra Pradesh government over the arrest, the bench said it was necessary that Rao's journalistic rights and his fundamental right to freedom of speech were protected.

"The petitioner himself did not make the statement on the live TV show and his journalistic rights need to be protected so that his freedom of speech is also protected.

We direct that the petitioner be released in the FIR subject to conditions imposed by the trial court," the bench ordered.

The bench, however, asked Rao not to make any derogatory statements on his show or allow anyone else to make the same.

The Andhra Pradesh Police arrested Rao from Hyderabad for hosting the programme on Sakshi TV on 6 June. They also arrested one of the show's panellists, journalist VV Krishnam Raju for allegedly terming the greenfield capital city as a 'capital of prostitutes'.

Both Rao and Raju were booked under several provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Information Technology Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Rao was also remanded to judicial custody for 14 days. *—PTI/Agencies*

YESTERDAY'S REMAINS

The remains of the crashed Air India plane lays on a building, in Ahmedabad, on Friday. A London-bound Air India plane carrying 242 passengers crashed moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday
PHOTO: PTI

'SAFEST' 787 DREAMLINER NOT SAFE ANYMORE

787 Dreamliner ***PHOTO: PTI***

Considered an airline's work horse for long-haul flights, Boeing's Dreamliners took to the skies 14 years ago and now, more than 1,100 such planes are in service.

And the Air India plane crash on Thursday that snuffed out the lives of 241 people onboard was also the first time that the best-selling wide-body Dreamliner or Boeing 787 suffered a fatal accident resulting in hull loss.

The Boeing 787-8 aircraft -- VT-ANB -- involved in the crash was 11.5 years old and had flown for more than 41,000 hours, according to aviation analytics firm Cirium.

There are 1,148 Boeing 787 variants in service globally, with an average age of 7.5 years, it said.

Indian airlines and 787s

Currently, Air India and IndiGo are the two Indian airlines operating the B787 planes.

Of the 34 B787s in the Air India fleet, 27 B787-8s are legacy aircraft. The first of the legacy B787-8 is slated to go for retrofit in July. The remaining seven B 787-9 joined the Air India fleet after the merger of Vistara with it last year.

Globally, the Ahmedabad crash is the first time that hull loss has happened for a B787 aircraft, according to an official.

Cirium on Thursday said the aircraft operated its first flight on 14 December, 2013.

The plane was delivered to Air India on January 28, 2014, and it was 11.5 years old.

"The aircraft had 18 business class seats and 238 economy class seats. It had more than 41,000 hours of flying time, and almost 8,000 takeoffs and landings, including some 700 cycles in the past 12 months. This is average for that aircraft build year/period," Cirium said.

Air India, which is expanding its fleet and overseas network, has an additional 20 B787s on order and a letter of intent for options for an additional 24 aircraft, as per Cirium.

Recently, IndiGo started operating a B787 leased from Norwegian carrier Norse Atlantic. IndiGo is to lease a total of six such planes for long-haul operations.

Headwinds

A few years back, the US watchdog Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had stopped deliveries of the Dreamliners due to certain issues but the plane was never involved in any fatal crash till Thursday.

When it comes to India, Air India had problems with Dreamliners due to battery issues back in 2013.

The battery troubles had also forced then government-owned Air India to briefly ground its fleet of Dreamliners. At that time, the carrier had around six such planes.

Also, the airline had received compensation from Boeing for the issues.

Best selling wide-body aircraft

Boeing, which has faced multiple headwinds in recent years, describes B787 as the "best selling passenger wide-body of all time".

The Dreamliners come in three models -- 787-8, 787-9 and 787-10. The 787-8 has a range of up to 13,530kms.

The plane's length is 57m, height is 17m and the wingspan is 60m, as per Boeing website.

The Dreamliner fleet has carried more than 1 billion passengers in less than 14 years, faster than any other wide-body jet in aviation history, according to the aircraft maker's website.

"A lighter and robust composite structure enables airlines to reduce fuel use by up to 25 per cent compared to the airplanes it replaces. The 787 has unlocked more than 425 new non-stop routes around the world, many of which were never served previously," it says. —PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

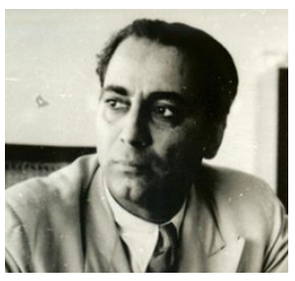
SALAR

Celebrities who lost their lives in air accidents

Former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani, who died in a tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad on Thursday, has joined the list of several top Indian politicians and prominent personalities who lost their lives in aviation accidents.

Rupani was on the London-bound flight that crashed moments after taking off from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, killing 241 of the 242 persons on board.

Here is a list of the top politicians and prominent figures who lost their lives in air tragedies:



Homi Bhabha (1966)
India's pioneering nuclear physicist Homi Jehangir Bhabha died in a tragic crash aboard Air India Flight 101 on 24 January, 1966.

The plane crashed into Mont Blanc in the Swiss Alps due to a miscommunication with the Geneva air traffic control.

Sanjay Gandhi (1980)
Congress leader and son of then prime minister Indira Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi died in a tragic crash on 23 June, 1980.

Attempting aerial stunts in a Delhi Flying Club aircraft near the Safdarjung Airport, the plane lost control and crashed.

Madhavrao Scindia (2001)
Senior Congress leader Madhavrao Scindia, himself a former civil aviation minister, died on 30 September, 2001, in a plane crash en route a political rally in Kanpur.

The 10-seater private aircraft crashed due to poor weather conditions near Manipuri in Uttar Pradesh.

GMC Balayogi (2002)
Lok Sabha Speaker and Telugu Desam Party leader GMC Balayogi died in a chopper crash on 3 March, 2002, when a private helicopter carrying him from Bhimavaram in West Godavari district crashed into a pond near Kaikalur in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh.

Cyprian Sangma (2004)
Meghalaya's Rural Development Minister Cyprian Sangma and nine others, who were heading from Guwahati to Shillong on a Pawan Hans helicopter, were killed when the chopper crashed near the Barapani lake, just 20km from the state capital, on 22 September, 2004.

KS Sowmya (2004)
Famous South Indian actress KS Sowmya, popular as Soundarya, lost her life in an air crash on 17 April, 2004.

The "Sooryavansham" actress was flying from Bengaluru to Karimnagar with her brother at the time of the crash.

OP Jindal and Surender Singh (2005)
Industrialist and Haryana Minister Om Prakash Jindal lost his life in a helicopter crash in 2005 along with Agriculture Minister Surender Singh.

Their chopper was en route Chandigarh from Delhi when it crashed in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur.

YS Reddy (2009)
Then chief minister of Andhra Pradesh YS Rajasekhara Reddy, popularly known as YSR, died on 2 September, 2009, when his Bell 430 helicopter crashed in the dense Nallamala forest due to bad weather.

Dorjee Khandu (2011)
Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu and four others were killed on 30 April, 2011, when a helicopter carrying them from Tawang to Itanagar crashed in West Kameng district of the state.

CDS General Bipin Rawat (2021)
India's first Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, died in a helicopter crash on 8 December, 2021.

The incident occurred near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu while he was en route from Sulur to Wellington with his wife and 11 others. —*PTI*

Israel's attack on Iran was years in making. Here's how they got there

Israel's massive strike on Iran on Friday morning came after decades of hostilities between the bitter enemies.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has long identified Iran as its greatest threat, citing the country's nuclear programme, its hostile rhetoric and support for anti-Israel proxy groups across the region. Iran meanwhile has pointed to Israel's repeated assassination and sabotage attacks targeting it, as well as its devastating war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, for its enmity.

While the two countries have long appeared to be on a collision course, a series of recent developments, including Israeli blows against Iran and its allies and the re-election of President Donald Trump, helped lay the groundwork for Friday's attack.

HERE'S A CLOSER LOOK: Why are Israel and Iran enemies?

Following Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, the country's leadership immediately identified the US and Israel as its main enemies. This was connected in large part to American and Israeli ties to Iran's last shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who fled Iran while fatally ill ahead of the revolution and despised by Iran's new leaders.

Over the past two decades, Israel has repeatedly accused Iran of developing nuclear weapons. Iran insists it has maintained its nuclear programme for peaceful purposes only, but the head of the U.N. atomic watchdog agency has warned that Tehran has enough uranium enriched to near-weapons-grade levels to make "several" nuclear bombs if it chose to do so.

The International Atomic Energy Agency and Western nations assess Iran had an organized nuclear weapons programme until 2003. Iran insists its programme is peaceful while still enriching uranium to near weapons-grade levels. US intelligence agencies have assessed Iran was not pursuing the bomb.

Israel sees a nuclear-armed Iran as an existential threat, and breaking Iran's regional network of militant proxy groups has been a major goal.

Over the past four decades, Iran built up a network of militant proxy groups it called the " Axis of Resistance." These groups – Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen and smaller militias in Iraq and Syria -- wielded significant power across the region in recent years.

Over the past two decades, Israel has repeatedly accused Iran of developing nuclear weapons ***PHOTO: PTI***

But the axis has weakened since Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October, 2023, triggering the ongoing war in Gaza and wider fighting across the region.

Israel has decimated Iran's strongest proxies, Hamas and Hezbollah. The weakening of Hezbollah contributed to the downfall of Iran's longtime stalwart ally and client in neighboring Syria, President Bashar Assad, last December.

After Iran launched a pair of missile attacks on Israel last year, Israel responded with strikes of its own, including an October attack that destroyed Iranian missile sites and weakened its air defences.

The collapse of Iran's proxy network, coupled with Iran's new vulnerability, created an opportunity for Israel to strike.

At the same time, the state of nuclear talks between the US and Iran created a window. Those talks have been faltering, but a sixth round was scheduled for Oman on Sunday.

An agreement could see the US lift some of its crushing economic sanctions on Iran and make it much harder for Israel to strike. Israeli officials feared the talks were a way for Iran to buy time as it secretly took steps toward a nuclear bomb.

On Thursday, for the first time in 20 years, the Board of Governors at the IAEA censured Iran for not working with its inspectors. Iran immediately announced it would establish a third enrichment site and swap out some centrifuges for more advanced ones.

By then, Israel apparently had already made up its mind.

Trump said he asked Netanyahu not to attack Iran while the negotiations are ongoing. But Trump has a long record of support for Israel, and there appeared to be little immediate blowback. —*PTI*

Owner of collapsed Dominican nightclub held

SANTO DOMINGO, 13 JUNE

The owner of a renowned nightclub in the Dominican Republic has been arrested following the tragic roof collapse that killed 236 people in April. Antonio Espaillat and his sister, Maribel have been accused of negligence for failing to act to prevent the disaster. They attempted to intimidate potential witnesses among employees. Their lawyer described the incident as "involuntary homicide," A former employee had evidence of conversations with Antonio that warned against holding the party. Rescue efforts saved 189 individuals after the collapse, which claimed lives, including notable figures such as singer Rubby Pérez and former MLB pitcher Octavio Dotel. Families of survivors have initiated lawsuits against the nightclub owner. *—PTI*

WB, IFC approve USD 700M for Pak's Reko Diq project

ISLAMABAD, 13 JUNE

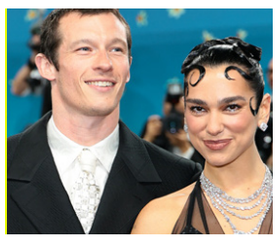
The International Finance Corporation and the World Bank have approved a concessional loan of USD 700 million for a major mining and resource development initiative in Pakistan, according to a media report. The Reko Diq project is located in Balochistan province, a mineral-rich region. As a result of the approval, the private sector is expected to invest USD 2.5 billion in the Reko Diq project, one of Pakistan's most important initiatives, Pakistani media said. The project is expected to start production in 2028. The cost of Phase One has been revised upwards to USD 5.6 billion from USD 4 billion. The World Bank reportedly plans to invest USD 2 billion annually in Pakistan's infrastructure over the next decade. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Mongolian PM to address protesters demands

ULAANBAATAR, 13 JUN

Mongolia's newly appointed Prime Minister, Zandanshatar Gombojav, has pledged to address the economic grievances that prompted widespread protests leading to his predecessor's resignation. Lawmakers confirmed Gombojav, former speaker of parliament, with an overwhelming vote of 108 to 9 late Thursday night, ending a period of political uncertainty. Gombojav faces significant challenges, including high inflation, an imminent budget deficit, and concerns over potential power shortages this winter. He proposed a reduction in spending by approximately USD 640 million along with economic growth. *—PTI*



Dua Lipa engaged to actor Callum Turner

LOS ANGELES, 13 JUNE

Pop sensation Dua Lipa has announced her engagement to British actor Callum Turner. The Grammy-winning artist, famed for hits like 'Levitating' and 'Dance The Night,' shared the news with Vogue. 'Yeah, we're engaged... It's very exciting. This decision to grow old together... it's a really special feeling.' Lipa revealed she received a custom-made ring from Turner, who consulted with her best friends and sister, Rina Lipa, before the proposal. The 29-year-old singer, currently on her 'Radical Optimism' tour, stated that both are preoccupied with their careers. Lipa and Turner, 30, began dating in January last year *—PTI*

A firefighter stands on a crane at the scene of an explosion at a residence compound after Israeli attacks in Tehran on Friday; Firefighters and people clean up the scene of an explosion at a residence compound after Israeli attacks in Tehran on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Israel strikes Iran amid nuke tension

Iran replaces slain military commanders; US begins moving its Navy

DUBAI, 14 JUNE

Israel's unprecedent attacks on Iran came amid heightened tensions of Tehran's increasing nuclear capabilities.

Israeli leaders cast attack as necessary to head off an imminent threat that Iran would build nuclear bombs, though it remains unclear how close the country is to achieving that or whether Iran had actually been planning a strike. Iran maintains its nuclear programme is for civilian purposes only.

"It could be a year. It could be within a few months," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed as he vowed to pursue the attack to "remove this threat".

"This is a clear and present danger to Israel's very survival," he said.

Iran however, claimed Israel attacked residential areas. Israel "opened its wicked and blood-stained hand to a crime in our beloved country, revealing its malicious nature more than ever by striking residential centres", Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a statement.

Khamenei also replaced two top military commanders killed in the strikes.

State TV said General Abdolrahim Mousavi will become the new Head of the Armed Forces, replacing Gen Mohammad Bagheri. Mousavi was previously the top army commander.

Khamenei chose Mohammad Pakpour to lead the Paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, replacing General Hossein Salami. Iran's Revolutionary Guard, created after its 1979 Islamic Revolution, is one of the main power centres within the country's theocracy.

Yet, Netanyahu expressed hope the attacks would trigger the downfall of Iran's theocracy, saying his message to the Iranian people was that the fight was not with them, but with the "brutal dictatorship that has oppressed you for 46 years".

"I believe that the day of your liberation is near," he said.

Meanwhile the US began shifting military resources, including ships, in the Middle East, two US officials.

The Navy directed the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner to sail toward the Eastern Mediterranean and has directed a second destroyer to move forward, so it can be available if required by the White House. *—PTI*

Israel launched Operation Rising Lion, a targeted military operation to roll back the Iranian threat to Israel's very survival. This operation will continue for as many days as it takes to remove this threat

-Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister

With this crime, the Zionist regime has prepared for itself a bitter, painful fate, which it will definitely see. It has revealed its malicious nature even more than before by targeting residential areas.

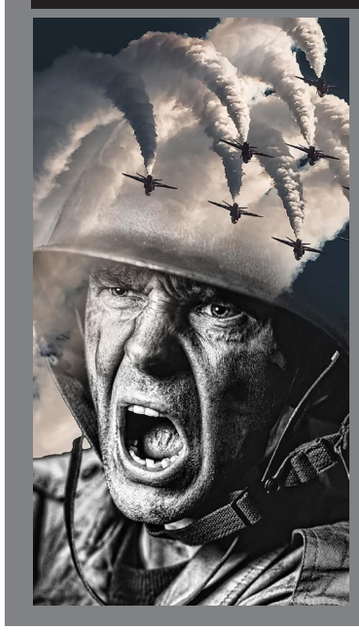
-Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader

I gave Iran chance after chance to make a deal.... Israel has a lot of (military equipment), with much more to come - And they know how to use it...It will only get worse. Iran must make a deal, before there is nothing left.

-Donald Trump, US President

ISRAEL AND IRAN'S TENSE TIMELINE

Israel and Iran opened a new chapter in their long history of conflict when Israel set off explosions in the Iranian capital of Tehran.



HERE IS A TIMELINE OF SOME SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE HOSTILITIES:

- 2010: The Stuxnet computer virus is discovered and believed to be a joint US-Israeli creation. The virus destroyed Iranian centrifuges.
- 2018: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel obtained data showing Iran covered up its nuclear programme before signing a deal with world powers in 2015.
- July 2020: A mysterious explosion tears apart a centrifuge production plant at Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment facility. Iran blames Israel.
- November 2020: A top Iranian military nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh is killed by an allegedly Israeli remote-controlled machine gun while in a car outside Tehran.
- 11 April, 2021: An alleged Israeli attack targets Iran's underground nuclear facility in Natanz.
- 16 April, 2021: Iran begins enriching uranium up to 60 per cent, its highest purity ever, and a technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent.
- June 2022: Iran accuses Israel of poisoning two nuclear scientists in 3 days.
- 7 October, 2023: Hamas militants from the Gaza Strip storm into Israel, killing 1,200 and taking 250 hostages. Iran, which armed Hamas, offers support to the militants.
- 1 April, 2024: An Israeli airstrike demolishes Iran's Consulate in Damascus, Syria, killing 16 including two Iranian generals.
- 14 April, 2024: Iran launches an unprecedented missile and drone attack on Israel, firing over 300 missiles and drones in response to the Israeli airstrike in Damascus. Israel intercepts much of the incoming fire with ally US' help.
- 31 July, 2024: Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh is assassinated by an apparent Israeli airstrike in Tehran.
- 27 September, 2024: Israeli airstrike kills Iran-backed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.
- 1 October, 2024: Iran launches its second direct attack on Israel. Israel shoots down most missiles.
- 16 October, 2024: Israel kills Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in the Gaza Strip.
- 26 October, 2024: Israel attacks Iran for the first time, striking air defence systems and missile programme sites.
- 30 April, 2025: Iran executes an alleged Mossad agent who played a role in the killing of Revolutionary Guard Col Hassan Sayyad Khodaei in Tehran in 2022.

Iran's paramilitary leader killed

TEL AVIV, 13 JUNE

Iranian state television confirmed the Head of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard was killed in Israel's strikes Friday morning.

General Hossein Salami was the chief of one of the country's most powerful centres, and his death was a tough blow to Iran's embattled leadership, which has had a series of setbacks in the past 20 months of Middle Eastern war and unrest.

Salami rose to power six years ago and had a history of threatening the US and Israel.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard was created after its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Since it was established, it's evolved from a paramilitary, domestic security force to a transnational force that has come to the aid of Tehran's allies in the Mideast, from Syria and Lebanon to Iraq.

It operates in parallel to the country's existing armed forces and controls Iran's arsenal of ballistic missiles, which it has used to attack Israel twice during the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Salami, 65, was appointed as head of the guard in 2019 by the country's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

General Hossein Salami *PHOTO: PTI*

The appointment followed US President Donald Trump's designation of the Guard as a terrorist organisation.

Salami joined the guard at the outbreak of the bloody 1980s Iran-Iraq war.

He later rose to head its air forces and was serving as a deputy commander in the guard when he was appointed.

Like other guard leaders, Salami routinely delivered speeches with harsh rhetoric towards Israel.

In a 2016 speech he said there was "fertile ground" for the "annihilation, the wiping out, and the collapse of the Zionist regime". He also threatened the United States. *—PTI*

Israel smuggled drones, into Iran

Israeli security officials said the country's Mossad spy agency smuggled weapons into Iran ahead of Friday's strikes that were used to target its defences from within. A base for launching explosive drones was established inside Iran and t drones were activated to target missile launchers at an Iranian base near Tehran. *—PTI*

Pak, Russia condemn Israel

Islamabad/Moscow 13 June

Pakistan on Friday strongly condemned Israel's strikes on Iran by calling them "unjustified". Pakistan Foreign Office in a statement said that the Israeli military strikes violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran and clearly contravene the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law. "Iran has the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter," the FO said.

Similarly, Russia strongly said the "unprovoked military strikes" against a sovereign UN member state, its citizens, sleeping peaceful cities, and nuclear energy infrastructure facilities are "categorically unacceptable and underscored that the international community cannot afford to be indifferent to such atrocities that destroy peace and damage regional and international security." *—PTI*

Hike in oil prices post strikes

Oil prices surged and Asian shares were lower on Friday after Israel struck Iranian nuclear and military targets in an attack.

US benchmark crude oil rose by USD 3.93 or 5.8 per cent, to USD 71.97 per barrel. Brent crude increased by USD 3.82 to USD 73.18 per barrel. *—PTI*

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his daughter attend a launch ceremony of destroyer Kang Kon at Rason's Rajin shipyard *PHOTO: PTI*

N KOREAN NAVAL DESTROYER LAUNCHED

SEOUL, 13 JUNE

North Korea has repaired its damaged second naval destroyer and launched the ship into the water in the presence of leader Kim Jong Un, about three weeks after it capsised during a botched launch ceremony, the Korean Central News Agency said on Friday.

Kim boarded the warship on Thursday and told troops that nothing can block the country's push to bolster its naval combat power in the face of US-led hostilities.

However, outside observers doubt whether the ship's engine, weapons systems and other electronic equipment can function normally, as parts of the warship were submerged for about two weeks.

North Korea's failed launch on 21 May sparked fury from Kim, who vowed to build a stronger navy to cope with escalating US-led threats against his country.

Kim cited criminal negligence to have caused it and ordered officials to repair the warship before a Workers' Party meeting in June. Authorities detained four officials, including the vice director of the party's munitions industry department, over the botched launch. *—PTI*

FEDERAL IMMIGRATION PROTESTS

ICE protests escalate, leading to arrests, curfews

AUSTIN, 13 JUNE

Protests over federal immigration enforcement raids escalated around the US as officials from coast to coast get ready for major demonstrations against President Donald Trump over the weekend.

While many demonstrations have been peaceful, others led to clashes. Hundreds have been arrested. 4,000 National Guard troops and 700 Marines were deployed in Los Angeles following protests over his stepped-up enforcement of immigration laws.

Volatile protests prompted officials to enforce curfews in Los Angeles and Spokane. National Guards troops in Texas and Missouri were asked to manage demonstrations. The 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals had earlier temporarily blocked a federal judge's order that directed Trump to return control of National Guard troops to California, shortly after the judge had ruled the National Guard deployment was illegal.

Activists are planning 'No Kings' events across the country on Saturday to coincide with Trump's planned military parade in Washington, DC.

Las Vegas

94 people were arrested on "various criminal and traffic" charges, and four officers were injured in a protest. Some threw bottles and rocks at officers.

A crowd gathered near the city's federal courthouse and blocked several streets.

Tear gas, flash-bang grenades and rubber bullets were used to disperse the protesters.

Demonstrators clash with members of US Border and Customs Protection during protests on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

Chicago

Hundreds of demonstrators packed a park plaza near Lake Michigan, later marching along the city's iconic Michigan Avenue.

Seattle

Hundreds of protesters marched through downtown Seattle to a federal building where immigration cases are heard. The building was covered in graffiti, with "Abolish ICE Now" written across its front window.

Spokane, Washington

A curfew was imposed in downtown Spokane after a protest. *—PTI*

'No Kings' protests on Trump's b'day

This week's protests are leading into the scheduled 'No Kings' demonstrations on 14 June, Trump's 79th birthday. Protests are planned in nearly 2,000 locations around the country, with the notable exception of Washington DC, which is where Trump will be holding a major military parade. Trump's military parade may feature tanks and other armoured vehicle rolling through the capital, will also mark the long-planned celebration of the 250th anniversary of the US Army. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Rupee dives 55P, closes at 86.07 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 13 JUNE

The rupee plummeted 55 paise to 86.07 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday due to a spike in global oil prices and a firm dollar amid rising tensions in the Middle East following Israel's attack on Iran's nuclear sites. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose sharply by 7.27 per cent to USD 74.40 per barrel in futures trade. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.25 against the greenback and traded in the range of 85.92-86.25 before closing at 86.07 (provisional), up 55 paise from its previous close. The local unit had settled at 85.52 on Thursday. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.33 per cent to 98.24. *—PTI*

ICRA moves to acquire Fintellix India for $26M

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

ICRA has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Fintellix India, a provider of risk and reporting solutions to global financial institutions, for USD 26 million. In a stock exchange filing, ICRA said its board has granted approval for the acquisition of 100 per cent shareholding in Fintellix India Pvt Ltd for a consideration of INR equivalent to USD 26 million by way of a secondary purchase, pursuant to execution of a share purchase agreement and other transaction documents. The rating agency said the acquisition will additionally strengthen ICRA Group's portfolio of credit risk assessment and monitoring tools by adding risk reporting capabilities to its existing solutions. *—PTI*

India's MFI shows signs of easing stress: Macquarie

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

India's microfinance (MFI) sector is showing early signs of easing stress, supported by improved portfolio quality data from CRIF Highmark for Q4 FY25 and April 2025, according to a recent Macquarie report. CRIF Highmark, a leading RBI-certified credit information provider, revealed in a call with Macquarie that top MFIs have aggressively written off bad loans, leading to cleaner balance sheets and improved loan origination. This is expected to lower delinquencies and credit costs in FY26. The Microfinance Institutions Network, a self-regulatory body, has tightened norms around loan limits and the number of lenders per borrower. This has enhanced discipline in the sector and reduced borrower overlap, with a growing share now having two or fewer lenders. However, while the MFI segment is stabilising, CRIF Highmark data points to rising stress in other loan categories such as auto and business loans. *—ANI*

NTPC plans to raise ₹4,000 crore through NCDs

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

State-run power giant NTPC on Friday said it has decided to raise Rs 4,000 crore through the issuance of non-convertible debentures (NCDs). Proceeds will be utilised for funding of capital expenditure, refinancing of existing loans and other general corporate purposes, the company said in a regulatory filing. NTPC has decided to issue unsecured non-convertible debentures of Rs 4,000 crore 17 June, 2025, through private placement at a coupon of 6.89 per cent p.a. for a tenor of 10 years 1 day, maturing on 18 June, 2035, the filing said. The NCD issue will be subjected to shareholders' approval, it said, adding that the debentures are proposed to be listed on the NSE. *—PTI*

Mkts tumble nearly 1% amid Israel–Iran tension

Sensex dives by 573.38 pts while Nifty drops by 169.60 pts

MUMBAI, 13 JUNE

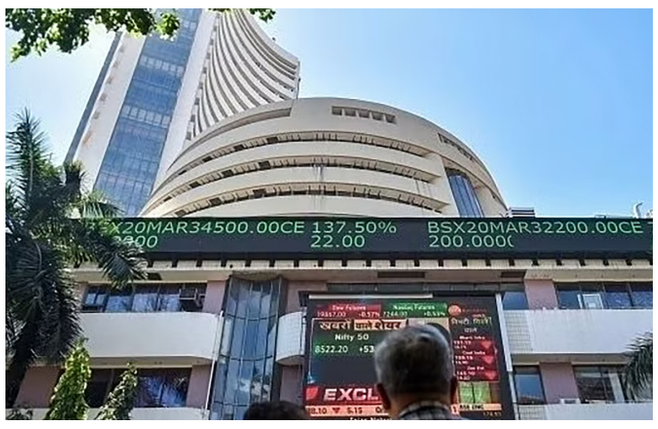
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent on Friday as weak global markets and a spike in Brent crude oil prices after Israel attacked Iran's capital weighed on investor sentiment.

Falling for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex dived 573.38 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 81,118.60. During the morning trade, it tanked 1,337.39 points or 1.63 per cent to 80,354.59.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 169.60 points or 0.68 per cent to 24,718.60.

Investors stayed away from riskier assets amid fears of a full-blown war between Israel and Iran and foreign fund outflows.

Among the Sensex firms, Adani Ports, ITC, State Bank of India, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank and UltraTech Cement were the major laggards.



Investors stayed away from riskier assets amid fears of a full-blown war between Israel and Iran and foreign fund outflows *PHOTO: X*

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Sun Pharma and Maruti were the gainers.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 7.44 per cent to USD 74.52 a barrel.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled lower. European markets were quoting lower. US markets ended in positive territory on Thursday.

"Indian equity benchmarks experienced downward pressure, driven by weak global cues and foreign institutional outflows. Market sentiment was notably impacted by heightened geopolitical tensions following Israel's military strike on Iran, which significantly increased risk aversion among investors. Although India's CPI for May eased below the RBI's comfort threshold, offering a positive macro signal, this was largely overshadowed by external headwinds.

Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth Rs 3,831.42 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, a London-bound Air India plane carrying 242 passengers and crew crashed in Ahmedabad minutes after taking off from the airport on Thursday afternoon. *— PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Singapore Airlines share price drops post AI plane crash

SINGAPORE, 13 JUNE

Shares of Singapore Airlines (SIA), which holds 25.1 per cent stake in Air India (AI), dropped on the Singapore Exchange on Friday, a day after the Indian carrier's plane crash in Ahmedabad.

Shares of SIA were down 1.7 per cent to SGD 6.91 as at the midday trading break, after earlier falling up to 2.1 per cent, according to The Straits Times.

At least 266 people were killed when a London-bound AI plane carrying 242 passengers and crew crashed into a medical college complex shortly after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport.

The Straits Times Index (STI) was down 0.5 per cent as Asian markets fell after Israel carried out airstrikes against targets in Iran, raising fears of fresh conflict in the Middle East and sending oil prices soaring, the daily said.

On 12 June, SIA said it is "offering full support and all necessary assistance to Air India during this time".

"Singapore Airlines extends our deepest condolences to all passengers, crew members and their families affected by AI Flight AI171. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone impacted during this difficult time," the broadsheet quoted SIA as saying.

SIA's stake in AI came about after the Indian flagship carrier merged with Vistara in November 2024. Before the merger, Vistara was jointly owned by Tata Sons and SIA. *— PTI*

Retail inflation likely to slip below 2%, says SBI Research

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

Consumer price inflation in India, which eased to an over six-year low in May (at 2.82 per cent) is seen declining further towards 2 per cent, perhaps even lower, by July, according to a report SBI Research.

Consumer Price Index-based retail inflation moderated to 2.82 per cent in May, much below the consensus estimates to hit a 75-month low. It was caused chiefly due to softening food items, particularly vegetables and pulses which declined by 13.7 per cent and 8.2 per cent respectively.

"This, together with easing spices, meat and fish prices was, however, somewhat offset by elevated levels of fruits, personal care and effects," the report said. "The positive development on headline front gets a tad masked though with the somewhat sticky nature of core inflation which edged up to 4.2 per cent, second-highest in last 19 months."

PHOTO: FREEPIK

SBI Research expects CPI Inflation average at 3.3–3.5 per cent in 2025–26, allowing the RBI some elbow room to navigate the "evolving landscape with forbearance."

Deciphering the state-wise inflation trends, the number of states/UTs inflation above 4 per cent has declined to 6 in May 2025, as against 32 States/UTs that had inflation above 4 per cent as in October 2024.

"We expect CPI inflation to remain below 4 per cent till Q3 FY26 while it may show some increase in the last quarter of the current fiscal. The benign inflationary expectations justify RBI's quest to support the momentum in capital formation for more durable growth," SBI Research said. *— ANI*

Guj gets $109.97M ADB loan to boost employment

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a results-based loan of USD 109.97 million (approximately Rs 927 crore) to support Gujarat's ambition of becoming a global industrial hub by building a future-ready workforce. The initiative is being led by the state's Labour, Skill Development and Employment Department in partnership with Kaushalya: The Skill University (KSU).

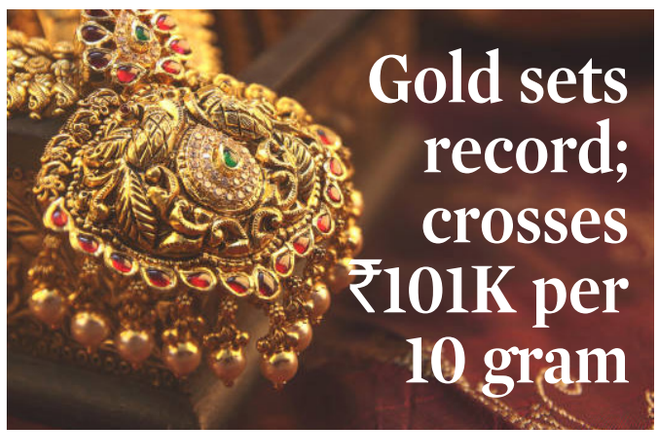
The Gujarat Skills Development Programme aims to provide industry-aligned, advanced training to enhance job readiness in high-growth sectors. It will strengthen the institutional and managerial capabilities of the KSU network. *— PTI*

LIC relaxes claim settlement process of AI crash victims

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) on Friday said it has relaxed its claim settlement process for Air India plane crash victims and also expedite the process. The corporation said it is committed to supporting those affected in the plane crash and will expedite claim settlements for the victims. "LIC has announced many concessions to mitigate the hardships of the claimants of LIC policies. In lieu of death certificates, any evidence in government records of death of the policyholder due to the plane crash or any compensation paid by central/state government /airline authorities will be accepted as proof of death," the insurance company said in a statement. All efforts will be taken to settle the claims expeditiously, it said. *—PTI*

भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA



Gold sets record; crosses ₹101K per 10 gram

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

Rising for the third consecutive day, gold prices on Friday surged Rs 2,200 to trade near a record high of Rs 1,01,540 per 10g in the national capital amid heightened tensions following Israel's military strike on Iran, which drove investors to the safe-haven asset.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity rallied by Rs 1,900 to Rs 1,00,700 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes).

On April 22, the yellow metal had climbed Rs 1,800 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,01,600 per 10g.

In addition, silver prices jumped by Rs 1,100 to revisit the all-time high of Rs 1,08,100 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday.

The metal rose by Rs 1,000 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,08,100 per kg on Monday.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the most-traded August delivery contracts of the precious metal zoomed Rs 2,011 to hit a record high of Rs 1,00,403 per 10g in the morning trade. Later, the yellow metal trimmed its early gains and was trading at Rs 99,906 per 10g. Globally, spot gold rose by USD 28.30 per ounce or 0.84 per cent to USD 3,415.13 per ounce. *— PTI*

Oswal Pumps' IPO subscribed 17% on day 1

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

Oswal Pumps on Friday floated its Rs 1,387-crore initial public offering (IPO) with the issue subscribing 17 per cent so far on the first day of the bidding process. The issue, with a price band of Rs 584-614 per share, will conclude on 17 June.

As of 2.44 pm, the IPO had received bids for 26,97,624 shares against the 1,62,12,980 shares on offer, data with the National Stock Exchange (NSE) showed.

The company's IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of shares valued at Rs 890 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of 81 lakh shares worth Rs 497.34 crore, at the upper end of the price band, by promoter Vivek Gupta. This aggregates the issue size at Rs 1,387.34 crore.

Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used for funding certain capital expenditures of the company, investment in wholly owned subsidiary Oswal Solar in the form of debt or equity, setting up new manufacturing units at Karnal, Haryana, payment of debt, and for general corporate purposes.

PHOTO: FB/OSWAL

- The company's IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of shares valued at Rs 890 crore and an offer-for-sale of 81 lakh shares worth Rs 497.34 crore, at the upper end of the price band, by promoter Vivek Gupta

Oswal Pumps commenced operations in 2003 by manufacturing low-speed monoblock pumps. Over the years, it expanded operations to manufacture grid-connected submersible pumps and electric motors.

The company manufactures solar-powered and grid-connected submersible and monoblock pumps, electric motors comprising induction and submersible motors, as well as solar modules. *— PTI*

ArisInfra sets price band at ₹210–222

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

ArisInfra Solutions Ltd has set a price band of Rs 210 to Rs 222 per share for its nearly Rs 500 crore Initial Public Offering (IPO), which opens for subscription from 18 to 20 June. The IPO is a fresh issue worth Rs 499.6 crore, with no Offer for Sale component. At the upper price band, the company's valuation stands at approximately Rs 1,800 crore. Proceeds will be used to fund working capital, invest in subsidiary Buildmex-Infra, acquire partial stake in ArisUnitern Re Solutions, repay loans, and for general purposes. *—PTI*

NCLT admits IREDA plea in Gensol insolvency

AHMEDABAD, 13 JUNE

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has admitted Gensol Engineering Ltd and its EV leasing arm to insolvency proceedings following a Rs 510 crore loan default to IREDA. The tribunal, citing leadership vacuum and corporate governance failures, appointed an interim resolution professional (IRP) to take charge, rejecting IREDA's nominee.

IREDA's petition highlighted regulatory scrutiny, alleging that the company had become "headless" after key directors resigned following SEBI's interim order accusing promoters Anmol and Puneet Singh Jaggi of fund misuse. Gensol also faces scrutiny from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs over financial misstatements and interlinked operations with group firms such as BluSmart Mobility.

The case may test the legal boundaries of group insolvency in India. Meanwhile, creditors including Power Finance Corp. have initiated recovery proceedings totalling nearly Rs 992 crore. The IRP will now manage claims, oversee resolution plans, and potentially steer liquidation if no resolution is achieved. *—Agencies*

Industrialist Sunjay Kapur passes away at 53 in UK

NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE

Industrialist Sunjay Kapur, Chairman and Non-Executive Director of auto components firm Sona Comstar, has died aged 53 after suffering a sudden heart attack during a polo match in the UK on 12 June, 2025. Just three days earlier, Kapur had posted a philosophical message on social media, saying: "Your time on Earth is limited. Leave the 'what ifs' to the philosophers and instead dive headfirst into the world of 'why nots'."

Sona Comstar described him as a visionary leader who played a pivotal role in shaping the company into a global mobility technology firm, built on innovation and sustainability. He also served as President of the Automotive Component Manufacturers' Association of India (ACMA) and co-chaired the Manufacturing Council of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Beyond his professional achievements, Kapur—ex-husband of actress Karishma Kapoor—was a devoted father and mentor, widely respected across the industry. The company assured stakeholders that operations and prospects remain unchanged as it continues to honour his legacy.

Founded in 1995, Gurgaon-based Sona Comstar is a global supplier of advanced automotive components, particularly for the electric vehicle sector. *— PTI*

TAKES ON NVIDIA

AMD sees AI chip market exceeding $500B by 2028

SAN JOSE, 13 JUNE

Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) Chief Executive Lisa Su has said that the chipmaker sees the artificial intelligence processor market topping USD 500 billion by 2028.

The Silicon Valley company said the market is likely to grow at over 60 per cent annually to exceed USD 500 billion, from being a USD 45 billion opportunity in 2023.

Addressing the company's flagship Advancing AI 2025 conference here on Thursday, Su said the growth will be led by the inferencing work, which is a shift from training.

The company unveiled the "MI350 Series GPUs (graphic processing units)" at the flagship event along with a host of other products.

Su said opting for the newly launched chips may be beneficial for customers, claiming that they issue up to 40 per cent more tokens per dollar.

It can be noted that Nvidia is generally considered an entrenched player in the GPUs market, and the demand for its chips is very high. There are waiting periods as well for the chips.

PHOTO: X

- The Silicon Valley company said the market is likely to grow at over 60 per cent annually to exceed USD 500 billion, from being a USD 45B opportunity in 2023

In her address, Su said that seven of the 10 largest AI customers, including the largest Indian telco Reliance Jio, are deploying AMD Instinct Accelerators at present.

AMD had last year announced the MI350 and announced that the same offering, which has displayed a four-times increase in compute as compared to the previous generation, is in production now and will be commercially available from the third quarter onwards. *— PTI*

Consistency will be crucial in England: Morkel

India last played red-ball cricket in early January, during the Sydney Test

Morne Morkel

BECKENHAM, 13 JUNE

Consistency will be key in English conditions, according to India bowling coach Morne Morkel, who admitted to being "a little bit nervous" about the squad's lack of red-ball time ahead of the Test series against England, starting 20 June. India kick off their new World Test Championship cycle with the five-match away series, under the leadership of newly-appointed captain Shubman Gill.

"I think consistency is crucial in England, and there is consistency when we practice, there's consistency off the field, finding your process, what's going to work for you as an individual," Morkel said on the sidelines of India's training session here.

"We've got a great variation, variety in our attack, guys with different skill sets so they can do that and still execute the basics well," he added.

India last played red-ball cricket in early January, during the Sydney Test against Australia. Additionally, several players in the current squad, including Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sai Sudharsan, will be featuring in their maiden Test series on English soil. "All in all, happy with the start so far. I was a little bit nervous in terms of the lack of red ball we've played, but seeing how the guys are moving around and training in the last three days is a pleasing sight."

"We have a fantastic group. There's some quality energy, and that's what you need. You need to go into a Test series confident and have that team spirit." Reflecting on the team's practice sessions, the former South African pace great noted that the conditions have largely favoured the fast bowlers so far. *—PTI*

> **Smith will take no further part in the World Test Championship final after suffering a compound dislocation of his right pinkie on Friday**
>
> -Pat Cummins, Australian captain

SA AND AUSTRALIAN PLAYERS PAY TRIBUTE TO PLANE CRASH VICTIMS

LORD'S, 13 JUNE

South African and Australian players observed a minute's silence and wore black armbands ahead of the third day of the World Test Championship (WTC) final at Lord's as a tribute to the Air India plane crash victims. An Air India passenger plane from Ahmedabad to London, carrying 242 passengers and crew, had crashed just moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon. The tragedy left 241 people on board dead, with only one person surviving. The total death toll has risen to 265 since the aircraft crashed into a medical college complex. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gambhir returns to India due to a family emergency

BECKENHAM, 13 JUNE

India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Friday returned to the country after his mother Seema Gambhir had to be hospitalized due to a health emergency, a BCCI source told PTI. The source said Gambhir had to fly back to attend to his mother, who suffered a heart attack and is currently in the ICU in a New Delhi hospital. The Shubman Gill-led Indian Test squad is in the UK to play a five-match series against England starting June 20 in Leeds."Gautam's mother had a heart attack on Wednesday. He and his family left for India on Thursday, and they have reached Delhi," the BCCI source informed. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Saptak Talwar lies tied 78 in Czech Republic

BRNO, 13 JUNE

Indian golfer Saptak Talwar carded a one-over 72 to be placed tied 78th after the opening day of Raiffeisenbank Golf Challenge here. Talwar is eight shots off the lead and has to pick up the pace if he hopes to cut. Talwar began his round on the back nine and had bogeys on the 13th and 17th holes. On the front nine, he was able to recover a shot on the fourth hole to gain back some ground. Jovan Rebula of South Africa, a nephew to four time Major winner Ernie Els, leads after the first round by one stroke. Jackson Palmer of the USA and Sebastian Garcia of Spain are placed tied second after playing a round of six-under 66. *—PTI*

Rookie Avani placed second in Belgium

HULENCOURT, 13 JUNE

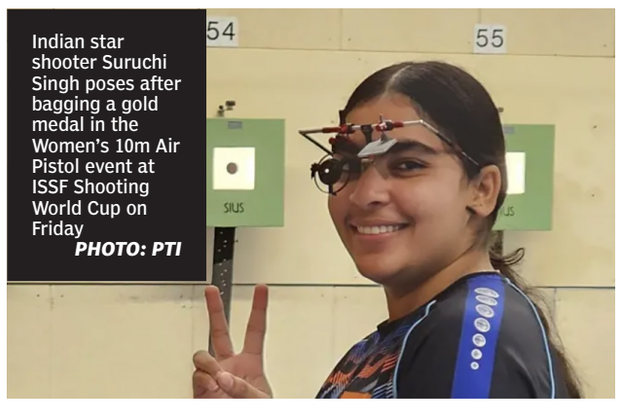
Indian rookie Avani Prashanth equalled her best start of the season with a 4-under 68 that gave her a solid tied second position after the first round of the Hulencourt Women's Open here. Playing in one of the late groups in the afternoon, Avani had seven birdies against three bogeys in an action-packed round. Australia's Kelsey Bennett topped the leaderboard after day one with an opening round of 67 (-5). Avani shared the second place with Germany's Helen as they carded 68 each.*—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Mumbai Falcons clinch T20 Mumbai League title

MUMBAI, 13 JUNE

A half-century by Rajesh Sutar and a useful contribution by Awais Naushad helped Mumbai South Central Maratha Royals defeat SoBo Mumbai Falcons by five wickets in a low-scoring final and clinch the T20 Mumbai League title. Electing to bowl, Maratha Royals restricted Mumbai Falcons to 157 for 4 in 20 overs and then reached the target with four balls to spare, with Sutar scoring 53 off 49 balls, studded with two boundaries and as many sixes. Naushad struck a quick-fire 38 (24 balls) and shared a 67-run partnership with Sutar for the fourth wicket as the pair took Maratha Royals to the doorstep of victory.*—PTI*


Indian star shooter Suruchi Singh poses after bagging a gold medal in the Women's 10m Air Pistol event at ISSF Shooting World Cup on Friday
PHOTO: PTI

Suruchi wins gold in women's 10m air pistol

MUNICH, 13 JUNE

Indian shooting's latest golden girl Suruchi Singh dominated a quality field to win her third straight individual ISSF World Cup gold medal with her triumph in the women's 10m air pistol final, here on Friday.

Appearing in only her third World Cup, the 19-year-old completed a hat-trick of individual gold medals and fourth overall, a couple of months after her yellow medals in Buenos Aires and Lima in April.

She shot a total of 241.9 in the final.

Soon after piped China's bronze medallist Qianxun Yao (221.7), Suruchi regained the lead with a 10.5, even as France's silver winner Camille Jedrzejewski (241.7) managed just 9.5.

A 9.5 in her final shot was enough for the Indian to secure the top prize as Jedrzejewski shot 9.8.

In the qualifications, Suruchi was placed second with 588, while double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker ended 25th after shooting 574.

Bhaker, who was doing commentary in the final, expressed her delight after her younger compatriot's gold medal. *—PTI*

FEELS SPECIAL

Karun Nair during the India A matches in England
PHOTO: X

Fortunate to be able to get the opportunity again: Karun Nair

BECKENHAM, 13 JUNE

A second chance in Indian cricket is a rarity, and Karun Nair is grateful for being able to wear the India whites again as he made his debut with the senior team after a stylish double hundred for India A against England Lions, in an unofficial Test ahead of the marquee Test series."Feels special," Nair told bcci.tv."(I'm) Very grateful and fortunate to be able to get this opportunity again.

Looking forward to grabbing this opportunity with both hands," said Nair, who made a national comeback after eight years.

During the first team huddle after the Test, specialists from the 'A' camp joined, and head coach Gautam Gambhir welcomed back India's second Test triple centurion."Comebacks are never easy.

The amount of runs you've got, the never-give-up attitude it's inspiring for the entire team. Welcome back, Karun Nair," the coach was seen saying in the video.

His longtime statemate KL Rahul, with whom he has played since his U-14 days spoke about his resilience when chips were down."I've known him for a very long time," Rahul said. "The months he has spent here in the UK playing cricket, and how hard and how lonely it was."For him to be able to do all of that and come back into the Indian team is special for him and his family, and friends like us who've seen his journey."Rahul termed the journey inspirational for one and all."It's very inspiring as well. Hopeful, his experience and learnings from County cricket here will hold him in good stead when he plays the Test matches."For Karun, it still feels surreal that he is back in the Indian dressing room. *—PTI*

QATAR, SAUDI TO HOST ASIAN FIFA WORLD CUP 2026

QATAR, 13 JUNE

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on Friday confirmed Qatar and Saudi Arabia as the hosts for the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 AFC Qualifiers.

Six teams, the third and fourth-placed sides from the AFC Qualifiers, namely Indonesia, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, will be divided into two groups of three to battle in a centralised format from 8 to 14 October.

The group winners will secure the two remaining automatic berths at the FIFA World Cup 2026.

Subsequently, the runner-up from each group will face off in the two-legged AFC Asian Cup Playoffs on 13 and 18 November, with the winner advancing to the FIFA Play-off tournament.

The official draw is scheduled to be held on 17 July.

Japan, South Korea, Australia, Jordan, Uzbekistan and Iran are the six Asian teams who have already confirmed their World Cup berths. *—PTI*

Justin Engel's youngest in grass-court quarters since '85

STUTTGART, 13 JUNE

German 17-year-old Justin Engel became the youngest player since Boris Becker 40 years ago to reach the quarterfinals of an ATP Tour grass-court tournament by making the last eight at the Stuttgart Open on Thursday.

Engel beat seventh-seeded Alex Michelsen of the United States 6-4, 6-4 to become the youngest quarterfinalist ever in Stuttgart. He is the youngest man to reach the quarters of any grass-court event since Becker won Wimbledon as a 17-year-old in 1985.

Engel, who turns 18 in October, will next face Félix Auger-Aliassime of Canada on Friday.

It has been a remarkable 12 months for Engel, who only broke into the top 800 in the rankings last July, having entered the 2024 season as No. 1,344. He is now guaranteed to move into the top 250.

Engel this week also became the second youngest player since 1990, behind Rafael Nadal. *—PTI*

Germany bids to host women's Euro 2029

DUBAI, 13 JUNE

Germany's bid to host the women's European Championship in 2029 is set to leave out the capital city of Berlin.

Germany announced eight cities, including Munich, Dortmund, and Cologne, that will host games if its bid is successful.

Berlin was among the three cities that didn't cut."The selected venues represent the best combination for a successful international bid to UEFA," the German football federation said in a statement, adding that it made decisions based on economic factors, regional balance, and UEFA requirements.

The announcement comes as Switzerland is set to host Euro 2025 next month.

UEFA has said it will choose the host for Euro 2029 this December.It would be the third time that eight-time European champion Germany has officially hosted the event, but the first since 2001.

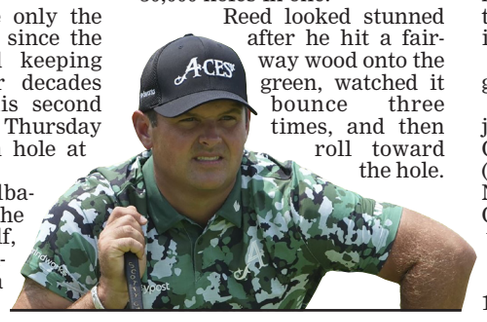
Back then, only eight teams took part, half of the current number.Germany also hosted the tournament in 1989 and held the final in 1995, when it wasn't the official host because games were split among participating countries. *—PTI*

Reed hits the rarest of shots at the US Open

OAKMONT, 13 JUNE

Patrick Reed made only the fourth double-eagle since the U.S. Open started keeping records some four decades ago, dunking in his second shot from 286 yards Thursday on the par-5 fourth hole at Oakmont.

The so-called albatross is considered the rarest shot in golf, with only a few hundred being made a year across the world, compared to more than 30,000 holes-in-one.



Reed looked stunned after he hit a fairway wood onto the green, watched it bounce three times, and then roll toward the hole. Unsure of where the ball went, he raised his palm to the sky, then pointed downward, asking if it went in.

The applause up at the green gave him the answer.

The 2018 Masters champion joins T.C. Chen (1985 at Oakland Hills), Shaun Micheel (2010 at Pebble Beach), and Nick Watney (2012 at the Olympics) as the only players to make an albatross at the U.S. Open since the event started keeping records in 1983. *—PTI*

SCHEFFLER HAD A FRUSTRATING DAY AT THE US OPEN

OAKMONT, 13 JUNE

Scottie Scheffler kept coming back to the same answer when asked in different ways how a day that began with optimism at the U.S. Open turned into a 5 1/2-hour slog that left him well off the front page of the leaderboard.

"I've probably got to give myself a few more looks," the world's top-ranked player said Thursday after a 3-over 73 left him seven shots behind front-runner J.J. Spaun.

Scheffler was talking about looking for reasonable birdie putts. Those didn't happen nearly enough during 5 1/2 often arduous hours at Oakmont. As for plain old "looks," however, well, the three-time major winner had those in abundance.

Looks of frustration, like when his drive on the par-5 12th landed in the middle of a fairway that slopes massively from left to right and kept rolling, and rolling, and rolling until it was in the first cut of the course's signature ankle-deep rough. *—PTI*

Junior women's hockey team defeats Belgium 3-2

ANTWERP, 13 JUNE

India defeated Belgium 3-2 to secure their third consecutive victory against the side in their ongoing tour of Europe here.

Indian women's hockey team coach Harendra Singh said on Friday that his side has targeted the upcoming Asia Cup as the perfect time to peak physically with eyes on qualifying for next year's World Cup.

Sonam opened India's account in the fourth minute, which was followed by goals from Lalthantluangi (32') and Kanika Siwach (51'). Marie Goenns (37') and Marte Marie (40') were the scorers for Belgium.

Following Sonam's early goal, India maintained their dominance in the first half and extended their lead in the third quarter with a penalty corner conversion by Lalthantluangi.

Belgium replied strongly with back-to-back goals in the 37th and 40th minutes to level the game. *—PTI*

FIH PRO LEAGUE

India look to bounce back against Australia

ANTWERP, 13 JUNE

Low on confidence after four successive defeats, a struggling India will be desperate to arrest the slide and stay in contention for the top prize when they take on a formidable Australia in the men's FIH Pro League on Saturday.

The European leg of the tournament has been disappointing for the Indian men's hockey team, which suffered 1-2 and 2-3 losses to Olympic champions Netherlands in Amstelveen, followed by back-to-back defeats against Argentina.

Ranked fifth with 15 points from 12 games, India needs to bounce back strongly against Australia to collect crucial points and remain in the race for a top-three finish.

India will take on Australia in the men's FIH Pro League PHOTO: PTI

"A win against Australia will be very critical for us, as it will not only help us gain crucial points but also give the team a winning momentum," said captain Harmanpreet Singh, who had missed the last match due to a finger injury, in a release. "We've had a few close games in the last four matches, and while we have been on the losing end, we want to change that and get some wins under our belts."

While poor penalty-corner conversions and the recurring issue of conceding late goals cost them dearly against the Netherlands, it was sloppy defending that led to a 3-4 defeat to Argentina in the first game. In the second, a potential equaliser from a late penalty was disallowed as India went down 1-2. *—PTI*